

Here are some points that you need to consider. You should have included all of these in your reflective activity.

- By denying that you accepted the gift you have probably realised that you have made a mistake. You must be honest with your supervisor now.
- Not being honest with your supervisor places her in a difficult position. A person who uses your service and one of your colleagues have said that you did accept the earrings, so this incident might be looked at more closely. A closer look could show that a withdrawal for the amount reported was made on a day when you and Mrs McTaggart were out. By not being honest it looks as though you have something to hide.
- When people find out that you accepted a high value gift from a person who uses your service, your supervisor might wonder whether you have accepted other gifts in the past.
- Your supervisor may suspect you give some people who use services more favourable treatment in return for gifts. Your lack of honesty could damage the effectiveness of the team. The SSSC Code of Practice says that effective teams are built on trust, respect and open communication.
- You should read your employer's policy on accepting gifts. It is your responsibility to know your employer's policies and to act on them. Policies on accepting gifts are there to protect both staff and people who use services.
- Your decision making shows that you should look again at the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers, which says that you must be honest and trustworthy. The Code also says that you must comply with your employer's policies on accepting gifts.
- You should have a better awareness of professional boundaries and how to maintain these. These boundaries are in place to protect residents and to protect you. Becoming more of a friend to a resident makes it difficult for you to continue to have a professional relationship.
- By accepting the gift and not declaring it, you are not meeting the standards expected of a social service worker. You should speak to your supervisor about what has happened. It is important to understand why what you have done was wrong.
- Your actions are a clear breach of the SSSC Code of Practice. This means there could be an investigation by your employer and your suitability to remain registered with the SSSC could be called into question.

When Mrs McTaggart offered to buy you the earrings the best thing to do would have been to politely explain that you cannot accept gifts.